

# Parliament in Bonn Is Dismissed To Make Way for Early Election

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BONN, Jan. 7 — President Karl Carstens dissolved Parliament today and, bowing to the wishes of the nation's political parties, called an early general election for March 6.

The President's decision had been expected since Chancellor Helmut Kohl intentionally lost a confidence motion on Dec. 17 to open the way to new elections.

Unlike most West European heads of Government, the West German Chancellor does not have the discretion to force new elections when he chooses. Some legal experts have accused Mr. Kohl of abusing the spirit of the West German Constitution, which has many safeguards to insure governmental stability.

President Carstens, who, like the Chancellor, is a Christian Democrat, was reported to harbor doubts about the confidence-motion device, but he voiced none in a brief televised speech this evening.

He observed that all parties had expressed to him their wish for new elections and that, as President, he was not in a position to judge the motivations of deputies who had expressed a lack of confidence in Chancellor Kohl.

"Many believe that the situation after March 6 could be more difficult than it now is," the President said, alluding to fears the election may not produce a stable majority in the lower house of Parliament. "But such uncertainty is involved with nearly every election."

## Prospects for the Election

The thrust of the President's remarks was to lend constitutional legitimacy to the confidence-motion device, rendering the West German Constitution more flexible for future political impasses.

Most opinion polls show the Christian Democrats taking just about 50 percent of the vote. Their junior coalition partners, the Free Democrats, have been consistently polling less than the 5 percent of the popular vote needed to return to Parliament.

A recent poll by the well-regarded Alsenbach Institute gave the Christian Democrats 51.1 percent, the opposition Social Democrats 38.6 percent, the Green movement 6.3 percent and the

Free Democrats 3.6 percent.

But no major polls have been disclosed since the Social Democrats won an unexpected majority in state elections in Hamburg on Dec. 19.

The Hamburg election suggested that the conservative Kohl Government was vulnerable to accusations that it was siding with the affluent against the poor. It also suggested that the electorate may be volatile now when unemployment is increasing and cutbacks in social spending are in prospect.

## Free Democrats Soften Tone

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the Free Democrats' leader, has begun to soften his tone toward the Soviet Union in recent remarks that appear to be aimed at an anxious electorate.

In a party statement issued today, Mr. Genscher called the Warsaw Pact's offer of arms reductions and a nonaggression pact "noteworthy and remarkable," and he declared that "the East-West dialogue is in full swing."

Mr. Genscher also suggested that alternatives to the Reagan Administration's so-called zero solution at the Soviet-American nuclear arms reduction talks in Geneva should be considered. Under the zero solution the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would forgo its planned deployment of 572 cruise and Pershing 2 medium-range missiles in Western Europe starting late this year if the Soviet Union dismantled its comparable weapons.

Mr. Genscher said that an "interim result" of the negotiations could be a reduction by NATO in the number of missiles in its deployment plan in return for the "widest possible reaching" limitation of Soviet missiles.

Last November Diether Stolze, the Government spokesman, said that "partial results" might be acceptable at Geneva, but Mr. Genscher's remarks have given the perceptible shift away from the zero solution greater force.

Public opinion polls and soundings by politicians show that many West Germans oppose the stationing of a new generation of nuclear weapons here and would greatly prefer to see a breakthrough in the Geneva talks.